FBI Chief Hails Punch At Protester

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FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover has sent former Kentucky Gov. A. B. (Happy) Chandler a personal note of commendation for punching a long-haired student during recent campus disorders at the University of Kentucky.

Neither Hoover nor Chandler, long-time acquaintances, would discuss the letter with Newsmen.

However, people who have seen a copy of the letter and heard the 71-year-old, two-time Kentucky governor and U.S. senator describe its contents, gave this resume:

Hoover, it was said, wrote to Chandler that he had read news reports about the May 5 incident on the Kentucky campus in which Chandler punched student Mike Greenwell of Louisvile in the nose during a schuffle after a trustees meeting.

The FBI director went on to commend Chandler and remarked that if such prompt action was taken by others the country would not be bothered by similar campus disruptions.

The incident was, in Chandler's words, "a one-punch fight—I hit him right smack in the nose, in the schnozzola."

Chandler apologized two days later to university president Otis Singletary and Gov. Louie B. Nunn, chairman of the Board of Trustees, to which Chandler belongs.

"I'm sorry that I did it. If I had had time to think, I don't know what I would have done . . . this young man grabbed me by the tie. I didn't even think . . . . I just swung and hit him right in the nose," Chandler said.

The incident took place on the 18th floor of UK's Office Tower as Chandler made his way toward a elevator, easing through the crowd of more than 200 students who had gathered to protest the killing of four students at Kent State University in Ohio and U. S. involvement in Cambodia. The trustees had refused to meet with the students.

Chandler said he was talking with a protesting coed when Greenwell reached out and pulled his necktie. Chandler responded with a punch.

Greenwell denied pulling the necktie. He and reporters who saw the incident said that Chandler grabbed the youth's hair with his left hand and swung with the right. Chandler rejected the hair-pulling account, calling it "a malicious lie."

The punching incident took place the day before Gov. Nunn ordered National Guard troops onto the university campus.